

Ladies, Lipstick, and Liberty:
Beauty Trends Within Women's Social Movements in 1960s America

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Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the art of applying makeup has been a symbol for female empowerment. As the cosmetics industries grew through industrialization, makeup became more affordable for all women. In the 1920s, trends in cosmetics reflected the bold and daring attitude of the modern 1920s woman. The liberal decade is reflected clearly in the dramatic dark smokey eyes and artistic lip and eyebrow shapes of the young women which were outlandish and bold statements of the day. The same can be said for the women of the 1960s. Classified as another very liberal decade, women developed new ideas of freedom during the 1960s. Social movements such as the Civil Rights movement gave women of color a new interpretation of freedom. Counterculture movements embraced young females and their emerging ideas of self expression. The Women's Movement gave voices to females of all ages and walks of life. Each of these groups proudly wore markings of their freedom on their faces in the way they applied their makeup, or lack thereof in some cases. The array of different looks that arose in this decade "mirrored more radical conflicts over sexuality, social life, and politics."

¹ Because certain makeup choices reflected different political and social ideologies, the history of women in the 1960s can be traced through the cosmetic industry and how these distinct groups of women chose to express themselves with cosmetics.

The 1940s through the 1950s were marked with a few signature looks. The focal point of the face was the lips. Bright and dark red hues were the staple of the classic 1940s-50s look. The eyes were left very minimal with some attention to full lashes and slightly winged eyeliner. The cheeks were predominantly rose or peachy tones and the skin was very matte to create that perfect, flawless look. During World War II, makeup was limited as were many other

¹ Kathy Lee Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998), Kindle edition.



Figure 1: This 1944 ad for Cutex nail polish depicts how beauty was marketed as patriotism in women's advertising.

emphasized beauty as a sign of patriotism.³

After World War II, cosmetic trends shifted back to the ultra feminine. The war time rationing was over and new cosmetics hit the market so women could achieve the new feminine look. Style icons of this time were Marilyn Monroe and Audrey Hepburn, among others. (Hepburn's style was revolutionary and transitioned with the changing trends in later decades.) Instead of the red lips being a symbol of power and strength as they were in the war, now the

advertising industry marketed them as sex. In Figure 2, an advertisement for Pond's new lipstick

commodities because the materials were instead used for the war effort. The makeup that was worn during this time though was not intended to make women feel "dainty." Women needed to feel strong, especially since they were taking on typical male jobs while the men were at war. The bright red lipstick became a symbol of patriotism and feminine strength² Women's advertisements in this time period heavily marketed their products with American patriotism.

For example in Figure 1, a *Ladies Home Journal* advertisement for Cutex nail polish in 1944 strongly



Figure 2: Pond's 1945 ad for their new lipstick shade Beau Bait illustrates the advertisement of sex used in marketing in the late 1940s-1950s.

² Madeleine Marsh, *Compacts and Cosmetics: Beauty from Victorian times to the Present Day* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Remember When, 2009), Kindle edition.

³ Unknown, "Cutex Advertisement," advertisement from *Ladies Home Journal*, August 1944.

shade entitled “Beau Bait,” the tagline read “These’ll hook him every time!” which implied the sultry dark lips would enable women to bait a potential spouse.⁴ After the war, there was a shortage of eligible men and women wore this perfect, sensual makeup as a way to attract husbands. There was also a standard set for wearing makeup. No sensible woman would be caught without her perfectly made up face even if she did not leave her house. The postwar boom made it possible for women to be frivolous with their makeup purchases. By the 1950s makeup was a symbol of sex and femininity, and it was expected to

be worn at all times. It was a sign of prestige. Even advertisements for Avon urged women to “take time out for beauty” as seen in Figure 3.⁵ The overall look of the 1950s woman exuded class, sophistication and sex appeal. However, the more important aspect of the 1950s was the emergence of the younger generation who would pioneer the drastic new trends in the 1960s.⁶

The youth of the 1950s championed the new ideas of beauty found in the turbulent 1960s. The baby-boomers were teenagers during the 1960s, and for the first time, nearly half of the population consisted of youth. In terms of makeup, the sixties were the years of the teenager with trends geared towards the young demographic. Fashion icons such as Twiggy, an English



Figure 3: This 1950s advertisement for Avon Cosmetics shows that makeup was an expected part of every woman's daily routine.

⁴ Unknown, "Pond Advertisement"(1945), location unknown, advertisement.

⁵ Unknown, "Avon Cosmetics Advertisement" (1956), location unknown, advertisement.

⁶ Marsh, *Compacts and Cosmetics*, Kindle edition.

supermodel, stepped onto the scene and created a standard for the young women of the decade. Other style icons included Audrey Hepburn, whose style adapted with the decade. In the early sixties, Hepburn's "Breakfast at Tiffany's" soft and natural look became another staple for young women. The cosmetic industry and advertisers heavily catered to the new youthful look ushered in by the 1960s. Teenagers did not want to look like their mothers, so they said goodbye to the perfectly dolled face and vibrant lips. While their mothers opted for a face that clearly looked made up with matte foundation, the teenagers of the sixties wanted a face that looked barely touched by makeup. It was all about looking youthful with the "bare look" and pale lips.

Because female teenagers accounted for eleven percent of the U.S. population, they greatly influenced in the cosmetic industry. Teenage girls in the 1960s in America purchased roughly twenty-five percent of the beauty products sold.⁷ For cosmetic companies it was important to cater to this demographic as they greatly influenced the market with their disposable income. Thanks to the postwar booming economy, young women could now afford to purchase these products. This caused an emergence of teen magazines and advertisements geared directly at teen girls. More specifically, white middle-class teens were the main focus for teen magazines and advertisements in the 1960s.⁸ They were the ones with the money to spend on cosmetics so they were the prime targets of the advertisement industry. Out of this economic boom and drastic increase in the teen population, new style trends emerged that reflected the various subcultures of the youth. Of course the older women also wanted to join the younger women and achieve the more youthful look, but some women still insisted on the classic look from the previous decade.

⁷ Victoria Sherrow, *For Appearance' Sake: The Historical Encyclopedia of Good Looks, Beauty, and Grooming*. (Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 2001), 89.

⁸ Julia Willet, *The American Beauty Industry Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2010): 275.



Figure 4: Supermodel Twiggy's September cover of *Seventeen* magazine in 1967 helped bring England's Mod Look to the youth in the United States.

Unlike the 1940s and 1950s, the focus was not the lips; it was now the eye. Eye looks became quite artistic and dramatic among young women in the 1960s which is another way they distinguished themselves from their mothers. The dramatic eye makeup consisted of thick, black eyeliner and in some cases, drawn on bottom eyelashes - Twiggy's signature look. The British model graced the covers of women's magazine *Seventeen* in 1967 (Figure 4) sporting the popular "mod" makeup.⁹

Her magazine covers in the late sixties helped to bring "mod" to the United States. This "mod" style,

originally popularized in Great Britain made its way to the United States during the British Invasion of the mid-sixties. Though mod itself was a complex subculture of its own in England, the American youth molded it into their own unique subculture where they were able to uniquely express themselves. Twiggy, one of the faces of Mod style said "There's no need to dress like everyone else. It's much more fun to create your own look."¹⁰ This statement reaffirms the ideals of the Mod style in America.

In the 1950s, conformity was crucial. Women were expected to emulate the same look all the time. They were expected to be doting housewives and the model American woman. However in the 1960s, the younger generations were tired of the stifling conformity and they expressed their freedom through these innovative looks. They created new, distinct looks as a

⁹ *Seventeen Magazine*, September 1967, cover.

¹⁰ Twiggy. "Twiggy Quotes ." Born Today. Accessed April 22, 2016, <http://www.born-today.com/celebrity/twiggy.htm>.

direct break away from the 1950s idealized woman. The 1960s were turbulent years full of many social movements that involved many young women so they dared to express themselves with their attire and makeup choices. This is unlike the feminine ideals seen in the previous two decades. There was one set beauty standard for the idealized woman. In the 1940s, the ideal woman was strong, patriotic, and feminine. In the 1950s, she was sensual, sophisticated and ultra-feminine. However, in the 1960s, that one set beauty standard broke down completely as women from various age groups, ethnicities and political affiliations challenged what it meant to be feminine.

As the 1960s progressed, the Mod look became associated with psychedelic rock music and the hippie counterculture. A new style was created altogether because of the counterculture music. The youth felt incredible pressure on the home front. The Vietnam War was at its height, and they were disillusioned with the government. Some young women ran away from home to San Francisco during “the Summer of Love” in 1967 or other hippie festivals because they wanted to be in a free loving and peaceful environment. The Mod look devolved in this group

and created an entirely different cosmetic style. The style became heavily focused on the natural look with very minimal makeup. Advertisers caught wind of the changing trends among the disillusioned young adults and began marketing products towards this growing demographic. In a print ad for Yardley (Figure 5), a British cosmetics company, green pale green eye shadow was



Figure 5: In 1971 advertisement for Yardley, cosmetics were marketed for the hippie counterculture established in the late 1960s.

marketed with “glow back to nature” and featured a young model with long, blonde hair and a crown of flowers on her head.¹¹



Figure 6: This image of Judy Smith captured by photographer Robert Klein during San Francisco's 1967 "Summer of Love" shows how face paint was used among young women.

However, the counterculture movement did not always emphasize the natural look. Another popular makeup trend found among young women in these hippie gatherings was colorful face paint. Very bright rainbow colors were applied not just on the face, but on the body as well. Young women drew colorful flowers and peace signs on their faces and bodies, giving rise to the “flower girl” or “flower child” terms.¹² Their use of makeup in this way expressed their personal feelings of the world. It

was fun, artistic, and beautiful. This group, so disillusioned

with the world around them, used cosmetics to portray ideas of love and peace that they desperately wanted. In a popular image taken by Robert Klein (Figure 6), a young teenager named Judy Smith smiled at the camera and showcased her face covered in face paint while in San Francisco's “Summer of Love.”¹³ It did not take long for women's magazines and cosmetic advertisements to market colorful face and body paint to young women. On the July 1967 cover of *Vogue* (Figure 7), Twiggy appeared with a purple and pink flower



Figure 7: In 1967 Twiggy was featured on the cover of *Vogue* with makeup resembling the trends seen within youth counterculture.

¹¹ Unknown, "Yardley Advertisement," advertisement from *Cosmopolitan*, May 1971.

¹² Victoria Pitts-Taylor, *Cultural Encyclopedia of the Body*. Vol. 1. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 146-148.

¹³ Robert W. Klein, "Summer of Love." AP Images. Accessed April 08, 2016.

<http://www.apimages.com/metadata/Index/Watchf-Associated-Press-Domestic-News-California-/284796cda9444b39bc6515c947f8b193/1/0>.

painted across the right side of her face which is a look that directly marketed to the women partaking in the counterculture movement.¹⁴

Of course teens were not the only group to express themselves through makeup. Women of all ages and ethnicities were embracing new makeup trends in this liberal decade. The Civil Rights Movement and Black Power movements helped establish new trends for minority women, in particular, African-American women. After World War II, African-American women would straighten their hair and follow white women's beauty trends. The Black Power movements embraced the natural beauty of African-American women. Women became proud of the natural hair texture in the mid-sixties and proudly sported afros as a symbol of their freedom from the white dominated beauty standards. In 1968 while the highly televised and controversial Miss America Pageant commenced, African American women put on their own beauty pageant as a protest to the lack of diversity in the Miss America Pageant.¹⁵

In previous decades, African-American women adhered to beauty standards set by white women. During the 1940s-50s most advertisements for African-American women featured skin lightening and other aids "designed to take the natural darkness out of the black complexion."¹⁶ The standard set before the 1960s, and even continuing into the early 1960s, was an emphasis on light skin and downplaying traditional African features. The Civil Rights Movement along with subsequent empowerment movements, African-American women rejected the white female idealism and embraced their natural beauty. In a speech delivered in 1962, prominent African-American activist Malcolm X asked:

¹⁴ *Vogue Magazine*, July 1967, cover.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Matelski, "(Big and) Black is Beautiful: Body Image and Expanded Beauty Ideals in the African American Community, 1945-1968." *Essays In History* (January 2012), 3-20.

¹⁶ Michael Leslie, "Slow fade to?: Advertising in Ebony magazine, 1957-1989." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (Summer 95 1995), 426.

Who taught you to hate the color of your skin? Who taught you to hate the texture of your hair? Who taught you to hate the color of your skin, to such extent that you bleach to get like the white man?" He closed his argument with "you should ask yourself who taught you to hate being what God made you."¹⁷

Malcolm X was a key figure in the African-American community at large, and his comments questioning the standards of beauty were part of a national debate that ultimately influenced African-American women to create their own beauty ideals which once again reiterated the entire breakdown of the one idealized woman mentality of the fifties.

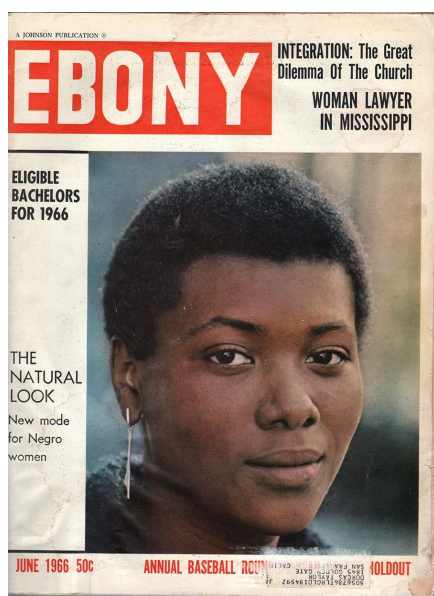


Figure 8: The July 1966 cover of Ebony magazine featured activist Diana Smith's natural beauty, disrupting the industry's standard of beauty.

As the Civil Rights Movement gained traction, discrimination in commercial beauty culture became a more prevalent issue. African-American women were denied service in white-owned salons and there were race-specific requirements for hairdressers and cosmetologists within the beauty industry.¹⁸ By the mid-sixties, the industry became more inclusive and opportunities for African-American women increased, albeit, at a slow pace. In the June 1966 issue of *Ebony* seen in Figure 8, Diana Smith graced the cover.¹⁹ Unlike previous cover models, Smith was a

twenty-year old civil rights worker – not a professional model. The cover story was titled “The Natural Look: New Mode for Black Women” and her appearance on the cover was an important symbol for the African-American community. Smith was the first to have an Afro on the cover

¹⁷ Malcolm X. "Who Taught You to Hate Yourself Speech." YouTube. 2007. Accessed April 19, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRSgUTWffMQ>.

¹⁸ Peiss, *Hope in a Jar*, Kindle edition.

¹⁹ *Ebony Magazine*, July 1966, cover.

of a middle-class African-American publication, but she also symbolized the political activism and the natural look trumping white America's beauty standards.²⁰ Women like Smith and Black Panther activist Angela Davis were pioneers for new beauty standards within their community as they proudly embraced their heritage through traditional Afro hairstyles. They were more liberated now that the structure of feminine beauty was dismantled. In the 1960s, the "black is beautiful" expression arose and was embraced by generations of African-Americans who sought to become more Afro-centric in their appearance and behavior.²¹

With the political atmosphere changing, the cosmetic industry realized that it needed to become more inclusive. They could no longer rely on just white women purchasing their products as there were outcries for cosmetic lines to carry products for darker complexions. By the late 1960s, African-Americans comprised eleven percent of the U.S. population and "spent more than \$30 billion per year for consumer goods and services."²² With eleven percent spending billions of dollars per year on consumer goods, which included beauty products,

companies slowly began developing new products and advertisements for African-American women. In a 1966 print ad for Posner Brush-On seen in Figure 9, a woman of color was the center focus. On one half of her face her skin is lightened, depicting the previous trend of skin lightening. On the other half, the woman is applying a foundation that complements her rich skin



Figure 9: By 1966, beauty ads targeting African-American women marketed natural complexions instead of following the previous skin lightening trend.

²⁰ Matelski, "(Big and) Black is Beautiful," 4.

²¹ Leslie, "Slow fade to?", 427.

²² Leslie, "Slow fade to?", 427.

tone. Posner characterized this foundation as “especially for your brunette-toned complexion.”²³

The popular door-to-door company Avon, even incorporated African-American women by developing a wider range of foundation shades to match their deeper complexions. Going a step further, Avon hired women of color and produced catalogues in Spanish to improve their company’s expansion to minority women.²⁴ By the mid-sixties, popular magazines felt pressure to include more African-American women. In August 1964 Patricia Evans became the first black model to appear in *Seventeen*, and less than a year later in March 1965 Hugh Hefner introduced Jennifer Jackson as the first African-American Playmate in *Playboy* magazine.²⁵

Although teenagers and minority women accepted new beauty standards with open arms, the feminists of the Women’s Movement rejected beauty standards altogether. Feminists in the 1960s pointed out the various flaws with makeup in several aspects. They found issues with the way cosmetics were marketed in the previous decades as well as the idea of wearing makeup. Popular feminist leader Betty Friedan wrote in her 1963 work, *The Feminine Mystique*, that “when one begins to think about it, America depends rather heavily on women's passive dependence, their femininity. Femininity, if one still wants to call it that, makes American women a target and a victim of the sexual sell.”²⁶ Friedan harshly criticized the advertising industry because of its portrayal and marketing for women. In a way, her comments about femininity apply to the beauty industry as well because the advertisements for beauty products focused heavily on very feminine appeal. Friedan argued that femininity kept women passive and vulnerable to being sold products based on sexuality.

²³ Unknown, "Posner Advertisement"(1966), advertisement from *Ebony*, July 1966.

²⁴ Peiss, *Hope in a Jar*, Kindle edition.

²⁵ Matelski, "(Big and) Black is Beautiful," 5-6.

²⁶ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1963), Kindle edition.

In the late sixties, feminists indicted the beauty industry as a major cause for women's oppression.²⁷ Radical feminists felt the societal pressure on women to live up to the standard of beauty was an example of patriarchal oppression where women were treated like objects to be "displayed and exploited."²⁸ By 1968 the radical women had rallied and protested the industry. In one of their most famous endeavors, radical feminists protested the Miss America Beauty Pageant in Atlantic City. They set up "freedom cans" which were trashcans that they threw their beauty products, bras, and other oppressive items in as a symbol to end women's objectification. In a flyer advertising the protest of the beauty pageant, the Women's Liberation group explained their freedom trash cans and told women to bring "old bras, girdles, high heeled shoes, women's magazines, curlers, and other instruments of torture for women" to be placed in the symbolic cans.²⁹ These items, they argued, oppressed women.

While Friedan had argued that femininity limited women from fulfilling roles outside of the home, feminists in the late 1960s certainly embellished on that notion. As historian Kathy Peiss wrote:

Unattainable standards of beauty had an effect at once intense and narcotic: Women were driven into an absorption with appearances, into making themselves the objects of men's visual pleasure. Thus beauty practices simultaneously diverted and excluded women from intellectual work, meaningful social participation, and politics.³⁰

While other groups of women felt liberated by the use of makeup in the sixties, feminists made some valid points. Women only comprised six percent of doctors, three percent of lawyers, and

²⁷ Peiss, *Hope in a Jar*, Kindle edition.

²⁸ Steve Craig, "Feminism, Femininity, and the "Beauty" Dilemma: How Advertising Co-opted the Women's Movement." *The Feminist eZine*. January 1998.

²⁹ Women's Liberation. "No More Miss America." Advertisement. September 1968.

³⁰ Peiss, *Hope in a Jar*, Kindle edition.

less than one percent of engineers in the sixties.³¹ As Friedan and Peiss noted, beauty impacted women's involvement in professional fields as women felt limited. In her letter addressed to Atlantic City Mayor Richard Jackson, Robin Morgan of Women's Liberation explained why her organization needed to acquire a permit for the demonstration. Morgan stated the demonstration was to protest the Miss America Pageant because it projected an image that puts the emphasis on "body over brains, on youth rather than maturity, and on commercialism rather than humanity."³² In another flyer for the event, the tagline read "Slavery Exists!" and listed the various ideas that enslaved Miss America such as selling the image of sex, conformity and capitalism.³³ Radical feminists felt Miss America represented the ideal beauty standard that the sixties had been deconstructing. Miss America represented the perfect, unattainable woman and was a pawn used to sell products to women. She would be on magazine covers selling her image of femininity and the accompanying cosmetics to achieve her look.

The more radical of the feminists took great offense to the beauty pageant enterprise but then focused their attention on the commercial beauty industry as they were the ones who were marketing the cosmetics. Advertisers were called sexist by feminists, and they protested the sexism seen in the advertisements and media by putting stickers reading "Sexist" on ads, newspaper articles, etc.³⁴ Cosmetic companies responded to these protests by redesigning their product packaging and revised their advertising to address the new understanding of feminine beauty. For example, one company in particular introduced a new line of products that focused

³¹ "The 1960s-70s American Feminist Movement: Breaking Down Barriers for Women." Tavaana. Accessed April 22, 2016. <https://tavaana.org/en/content/1960s-70s-american-feminist-movement-breaking-down-barriers-women>.

³² "Request for Demonstration Permit." Robin Morgan to Richard Jackson. August 29, 1968. Atlantic City, New Jersey.

³³ Women's Liberation. "Slavery Exists." Advertisement. September 1968.

³⁴ "The 1960s-70s American Feminist Movement," Accessed April 22, 2016, <https://tavaana.org/en/content/1960s-70s-american-feminist-movement-breaking-down-barriers-women>.

directly towards feminists and professionals. In 1967 Estee Lauder introduced Clinique, a line of products still used today. Clinique focused on hygiene over beauty and sent a message of asexuality with its neutral color palette and nondescript advertising.³⁵

Although radical feminists saw femininity and the use of cosmetics as hindrances in the advancement of women in professional fields and society, cosmetics and the beauty industry actually helped the Women's Movement. Though the radical feminists who protested beauty pageants and burned bras would be mortified at the thought, feminist leaders who were attractive and used makeup contributed the Women's Movement's exposure in the media. Because of figures like Gloria Steinem and Germaine Greer, media was attracted to their appealing image and their words. These attractive women became the face of feminism to the public and provided examples of feminists who were not the "negative stereotypes of humorless, ugly, man-hating shrews."³⁶ Steinem and Greer demonstrated how makeup could be used not as a symbol of male oppression even if others in their ranks disagreed.

Of course even with the feminist backlash, some women chose to promote traditional values. As the tide of politics changed, conservative women became more vocal in the late sixties. After a decade full of social reform and equality protests, the housewives who were not impressed with Friedan's depiction of them in *Feminine Mystique* embraced their femininity. In fact, conservative women were once thought of as subservient and weak for embracing their femininity. By the late sixties they showed the nation that they could pass an agenda and elect politicians "who would protect traditional values, the family, and the future generation of

³⁵ Peiss, *Hope in a Jar*, Kindle edition.

³⁶ "The 1960s-70s American Feminist Movement."

America.”³⁷ Because of the drastic revisions of beauty standards in the decade, femininity was no longer considered weak. Conservative women embraced the standard of beauty.

Even entrepreneur Mary Kay Ash who founded the cosmetic company Mary Kay was a conservative woman. Her enterprise relied on selling femininity. She believed in the traditionalist ideals of womanhood and sought out displaced homemakers and women rocked by the social and economic turmoil to work for her company. Ash created job opportunities for women, catered to women’s needs as mothers and avowed women’s desires to look feminine.³⁸ In some regards, Ash was a feminist. She agreed with the leftist feminists that women needed economic empowerment and demanded recognition of women’s professional abilities. However, Ash held strong beliefs of beauty and aesthetics that feminists would not support. According to Ash if women wanted to earn respect in the business world, they needed to demonstrate respect to male authority by wearing feminine clothing, makeup, and hairstyles.³⁹ While Ash advocated for women’s venture into professional fields outside of the home, she still supported traditional female roles. She was able to create a balance between feminist ideals and the traditional femininity, helping conservative women feel more empowered while maintaining their preferred aesthetic.

By the 1960s, the narrow standard of beauty had been deconstructed. Young women did not want to emulate their mothers’ signature 1950s look. With the emergence of new supermodels like the thin and daring Twiggy, teenage girls experimented with bold new styles to set themselves apart from the previous decade. As young women became more disillusioned with

³⁷ Network of Enlightened Women, "Our Activist Roots: Conservatism in the 1950s-1960s," Accessed April 22, 2016, <http://enlightenedwomen.org/our-activist-roots-conservatism-in-the-1950s-1960s/>.

³⁸ Peiss, *Hope in a Jar*, Kindle edition.

³⁹ Beth Kreydatus, "'Enriching Women’s Lives’: The Mary Kay Approach to Beauty, Business, and Feminism," *Business and Economic History On-Line* 3 (2005).

the world in the later sixties, they expressed their whimsical mind with rainbow face and body paint at hippie gatherings, especially during the “Summer of Love” in 1967 and Woodstock in 1969. Many women of color also refused to take part in the narrow standard of beauty set by white American women. As social movements for African Americans gained momentum, African American women ditched the skin lighteners and hair straighteners and proudly displayed their natural complexion and afro hairstyles. Feminists completely rejected makeup application and the beauty industry as they believed the establishment oppressed women. They were quite vocal in their damnation of the industry, but makeup played an ironic role in getting publicity for their cause. The feminists who did wear makeup provided the feminist movement with attractive faces that attracted media and widened their exposure. Meanwhile conservative women in the late 1960s were content to embrace their femininity through cosmetics. Women like Mary Kay Ash blended feminist ambitions of economic empowerment with the traditional women’s roles and glorified the role of the homemaker.

When breaking down the decade, women could not be lumped into one large mass as each of these groups developed with very different objectives in terms of beauty and empowerment. What the young white teenagers wanted to achieve with their “mod” look was a drastically different goal than the goals of radical feminists. What African American women wanted from their cosmetics was inclusiveness and a celebration of diversity whereas conservative women would have wanted the beauty standard to stay the same. The standard of beauty seen in the 1940s and 1950s completely disintegrated in the 1960s because of the many social movements giving a voice to all types of women. The 1960s were interesting years for a plethora of reasons because so many discriminated groups achieved new freedoms. For women,

they wore their politics on their face. In the shade of the lipstick and the thickness of the eyeliner, one could tell where a woman stood in the dense atmosphere of change in the 1960s.

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